

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action mailed June 8, 2005, has been received and its contents carefully considered. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Turning first to the rejection of claim 15 as being indefinite, without conceding the propriety of this rejection, and solely to expedite prosecution of the application, claim 15 has been amended to remove the reference to the abrasive particle coating on the surface of the belt. While it is submitted that portion of the specification identified in the Office Action actually does support the original claim language, it is believed that this amendment should overcome any concerns on the part of the Examiner. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2 and 15 were rejected as being unpatentable over Muller in view of either Ashton, Volz or Donahue '909. Initially, applicant notes that the reference to Ashton is confusing, since such a document does not appear to be of record in this application. However, the undersigned assumes that this references was intended to be the patent to Ashworth which has been used in prior rejections. Accordingly, the following remarks will refer to the Ashworth patent.

This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons. The sole independent claim in this application, claim 1, recites a number of features that are not present in the references whether are taken singularly or in combination. For example, claim 1 recites a grinding belt that has connection devices on its ends to form an endless belt. While the primary citation to Muller does disclose an endless belt, it is respectfully noted that two of the secondary citations, Donahue and Volz it is respectfully notes that two of the secondary citations do not refer to belts of any kind nor to endless belts.

Volz pertains to a coilable measuring strip connection. More specifically, a measuring strip 16 is being attached to a coiled device 14. It is respectfully submitted that any proposed

combination of Volz with Muller is improper, at least because these references deal with a different field of endeavor. One skilled in the art of belts manufacture would not necessarily look to measuring strip connections. In sum, it is respectfully submitted that these two references are from different technologies and different fields in the art. Further, they are concerned with overcoming different problems. For example, page 2 of the present application describes that various problems can be overcome by the present invention, including grinding belt flexibility, service life and convenience in installation and also in shipping and storing. Besides the initial deficiency of being in a non-related art, Volz also fails to remedy the deficiencies of the primary references for reasons discussed further below.

Donahue also does not pertain to the field of endless belts. To the contrary, Donahue relates to band steel used in bale ties or cask hoops. Again, one skilled in the art trying to overcome problems associated with an endless grinding belt would not look to the art of band steel connections.

Turning to Ashworth, while this reference does relate to a belt fastener, it relates to a "machine belt" and not a grinding belt. Ashworth also fails to remedy the deficiencies of the primary reference as discussed in more detail below.

For the reasons above, it is respectfully submitted that one skilled in the art would not look to the secondary references to modify Muller as proposed by the Examiner. The Office Action concedes that the primary reference to Muller does not disclose or suggest the recited key hole shape. In particular, applicant notes that claim 1 recites an elongated hole whose length corresponds roughly to a width of the belt, and a counter piece that is at least as wide as the width of the grinding belt, as well as that the elongated hole has a first region that is wider than a second region. Muller clearly does not teach or suggest these features as appears to be understood in the Office Action.

Turning to Volz, it is noted that the tab 28 appears to be narrower than the width of the extension piece 20. This further distinguishes the claimed endless belt from the reference of

Volz. Moreover, this structure cannot be said to suggest a counter piece that is least as wide as the width of the belt. The Office Action appears to recognize this deficiency when it notes that the width of the counter piece is narrower than the width of the extension piece. However, applicant is unsure as to why the Office Action talks about the counter piece of Volz being “narrower than the width of a belt” because Volz as discussed above is not concerned with an endless belt. To the contrary, applicant believes this highlights why the proposed combination does not read on claim 1.

Turning now to Ashworth, Ashworth clearly does not teach or suggest an elongated hole whose length corresponds roughly to the width of the belt. To the contrary, Ashworth has three holes, each much smaller than the width of the belt. In addition, Ashworth does not teach recesses having first and second regions as claimed.

At least for the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that (1) the secondary references should not be combined with the primary reference as proposed because they relate to different fields; and (2) even if combined, the references fail to teach or suggest all of the features recited in claim 1.

Turning to claim 2, it is respectfully noted that neither Muller, Donahue or Ashworth disclose an elongated hole having a round region. Moreover, Volz does not disclose a center piece equal to the width of the part being connected to. Nor does it relate to an endless belt. Therefore, independent consideration of claim 2 and specific treatment thereof is respectfully requested.

Turning now to the rejection of claims 3-14 as being over references applied with respect to claims 1 and 2, taken further in view of Smith, this rejection is also traversed. Applicant respectfully submits that one would not look to the field of the adjustable strap of Smith in order to improve the grinding belt recited in claim 1. The Examiner is respectfully requested to provide some motivation with the references themselves for combining these differing technologies.

With respect to the rejection of claim 16 as being unpatentable over the references applied with respect to claims 1 and 2, taken further in view of Horton, applicant also respectfully submits that it is based on a hindsight combination of multiple references in different fields, without providing any explicit motivation within the references themselves for such combination.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of the application are believed in order, and such action is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would be helpful in expediting prosecution of the application; the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at 202-861-1696.

In the event this paper is not timely filed, Applicant petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fee deficiencies or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-2036 with reference to Attorney Docket No. **87305.0025**.

Respectfully submitted,

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